

## Perception of Fear in Jordanian Oral Folk Tales: A Cultural and Psychological Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of fear in Jordanian oral folklore, focusing on how supernatural beings are used to transmit cultural values and strengthen social cohesion. Folktales in Jordan often depict ghouls, jinn, and other mythical figures as narrative devices that encourage caution, resilience, and moral awareness. By examining these stories, the research considers how fear functions not only as a pedagogical tool but also as a mechanism for preserving collective memory and identity. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining narrative analysis with survey data collected from 334 respondents across Jordanian society. The survey instrument, designed on a five-point Likert scale and validated through expert review, addressed three dimensions: fear in Jordanian folktales, religious aspects, and gender representation. Reliability tests indicated high internal consistency, and statistical analyses (t-tests and ANOVA) were conducted to explore variations across gender, age, and education. Findings suggest that fear of the unknown in Jordanian folklore operates as a bridge between the natural and the supernatural, reinforcing social norms and preparing individuals to face life's challenges. Respondents highlighted the cultural significance of supernatural figures as symbols of both caution and strength. While religious and gender-related themes were evident in these tales, perceptions of fear did not differ significantly across demographic groups. These results underline the continuing relevance of folklore in transmitting ethical frameworks, sustaining psychological resilience, and maintaining cultural continuity across generations.

**Keywords:** Oral Folk Tales, Cultural Heritage, Fear, Psychoanalysis Theory, Supernatural Creatures

### INTRODUCTION

Oral traditions are more than stories, they are a heartbeat of culture in which one generation connects to another, reflecting community values, fears, and dreams. Storytelling, since the very beginning of human existence, is considered the first important way to communicate meaning and interpret the world. As Calsamiglia and Tusón (2001:270) so aptly put it, folk tales are a legacy of narration through which folk learn about their surroundings and positions herein. These tales are not static; they change, adapt, and continue to convey the collective memories of a people from generation to generation.

A folk tale's central importance in the life of the speaker makes its area of interest to many other cultures. Functioning as cultural means of educating, warning their young, or cementing relations, they are more than mere entertainments for villagers. Be it ghost stories about a demon in the desert or weird tales of jinn haunting desolate houses, the far-reaching roots of such myths in the Jordanian identity. They are told in homes, among friends, and at campfires, where changing meanings are bestowed on them with each retelling while retaining their past. Such myths gradually surpass boundaries of generation and culture giving witness to how intertwined language, identity, and culture seem to be (Alkhamash, F, 2014:13).

Folk tales are so powerful because they can engage their audience: the emotions elicited include joy, sadness, awe, and fear. The emotional response of fear becomes an opportunity for imparting life lessons. Such stories instill caution, respect for the unknown, and understanding of complexities of life into the children. Folklore, says Lloyd (1995), connects the natural and supernatural worlds, demonstrating the interrelations between these two behemoths in a way that speaks to the people (59). This association often reaffirms key values about good and evil, embedding their primary moral lessons in seemingly simple or innocent narratives (Boudinot, 2005).

Folktales in Middle Eastern tradition are the worthy repositories of morality and morality tales, entertainment, and cultural preservation. To lend depth and intensity to these stories, they often use the recurring motif of some aspect of fear: fear of justice, love, betrayal, or valor. Usually, Jordanian folklore expresses fright in terms of existential fears and dilemmas, and also through supernatural encounters with ghouls and jin. Those stories bring characters-and their audiences as well-up against their vulnerabilities, imperfections, and greatest fears, and through the bringing in of this confrontation, they also tell time-tested tales of faith, valor, and resiliency, and teach one how to deal with the challenges of living.

Folk tales are the cultural artifacts that represent, along with their public psyche, the ethical truths and moral paradigms that make a society-and-more. They take on a special role in the Middle East as a source of entertainment, a media for passing some cultural inheritance from one generation to another. In these stories, fear is multifaceted: it could be social, existential, or supernatural, and it is often a vehicle for moral lesson, cultural warning, and reconnection. While entertaining, the stories reinforce culture and values, urge perseverance, and remind us of how storytelling transcends the ages to forge bonds among people, impart knowledge, and preserve identity with the help of dread in their storylines and characters.

Jordan's folklore amalgamates shades of Islamic, Arabic, and Bedouin traditions, thus weaving disparate cultural influences into the tapestry of this country's life. They often incorporate historical occurrences and something of mythical conflicts with moral lessons, thus depicting the past, morals, and social conventions of the country. Across cities and regions, these tales vary in their expressions, representing cultural diversity. However, common themes abound: hospitality, loyalty, and the supernatural. There are not many collections of folktales from Jordan, but anthropological studies and academic research have greatly improved insight into themes, motifs, and cultural significance of these tales.

The paper shall so apply several academic paradigms to study how fear functions in Jordanian folktales. Psychoanalytic theory, as elaborated by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, can unpick the very unconscious wishes and fears enmeshed within these tales. Jung's (1959) mapping of archetypes providing a tool for investigating act or symbolic representations of fear in folktales while Freud's (1919) characterization of the Uncanny provides another potential means of investigating horror symbolism within. Cultural evolutionary theory (Boyd and Richerson, 1985) would chart the changes in these narratives through time, while structuralism (Claude Levi-Strauss, 1963) would enable the identification of recurrent themes and binary oppositions in the tales. Finally, terror management theory, as developed by Becker (1973) and Greenberg et al. (2015), would seek to study how folktales address existential concerns, such as the fear of dying, and thus provide symbolic mechanisms for coping. This article shall investigate different functions of fear in Jordanian folktales: the ways fear influences the cultural identity, moral values, and unbroken ties of people to their roots. The study aims to conceptualize some of the psychological, cultural, and symbolic paradigms of terror concerning folklores involving mythic monsters such as Jinn and Ghouls. This is a forward step in promoting the understanding of Jordanian folklore and its continually important role in the lives of its bearers.

### **Fear in Middle Eastern Folk Tales**

Fear has surfaced as a good moral motif in Middle Eastern folk tales and it may introduce general kinds of fears, which in turn reflect a more latent cultural and spiritual landscape. Supernatural beings like jinn, ghouls and demons recur in these tales. Embodiments of the unknown and everything uncontrollable- El-Shamy, 1999. They haunt the void- places deserted, deserts of sand, crossroads- which encumber nature and the world of the supernaturals (Dundes, 1980). Cursed things. Haunted places. Evil spirits as an added eerie creepy factor to thrill the audience by taking them into a world where the normal and the abnormal converge (Muhawi and Kanaana 1989, p. 62).

In addition to the supernatural sphere, fear from Middle Eastern folk tales relates to quite several existential concerns or societal apprehensions. Common themes in the tales therefore lean towards death, divine judgment, and the afterlife, signifying deep-seated spiritual preoccupations (Greenberg et al., 2015). Those who confront death or face ethical dilemmas often become mythological symbols of human beings teaching their lessons in strength, faith, and consequence (Becker, 1973). These stories have then become instruments for understanding and managing existential fears while at the same time embedding cultural and religious meanings.

Middle Eastern folk tales also speak of social fears, such as fear of rejection, shame, or stigma. Forbidden loves, family honour, and cultural expectations illuminate the unspoken drama of the social hierarchies and

relationships that exist therein (Abu-Lughod, 1986). Such relevant stories often take the form of cautionary tales, warning against doing otherwise, as those actions threaten to disturb social harmony and would bring dishonour to the family. With these fears effecting their folk knowledge, tales further stress cultural tabloids and norms, thus exercising control over the audience's behaviour and value system.

### **Symbolism and Allegory in Folk Tales**

The prevailing styles of fear in Middle Eastern folklore manifest in symbiotic and allegorical levels, standing for deeper psychological, spiritual, and cultural occurrences. The very symbols of darkness, shadow, and the unknown trigger primal fears and instincts from deep inside, tapping into universally common human experiences (Jung, 1959). The imagery of the darkness of night or that of the desert could easily conjure up the different ambiances of physical danger with existential uncertainty and trigger feelings of unease amplified by the active collaboration of the listeners.

The allegorical tales showcase protagonists who face and conquer fears or external threats with chilling effect. These stories appeal to the audiences on literally and metaphorically because; they teach about fighting spirit, resilience, and the triumph of good over evil (Propp, 1968). Often the common logos of the hero's journey found in folk tales involve fighting against supernatural foes or passing through dangerous terrains, which symbolize the human struggle against fears in men and their limitations (Campbell, 1949). The myths teach the members of the audience to confront their fears and be reborn as stronger people with shared cultural values.

### **Fear in Jordanian Folk Tales**

Jordanian folk tales are a segment of the Middle Eastern folklore and have been thoroughly inspired by the culture and religion of the region. The stories are grounded in the values, norms, and beliefs of Jordanian culture, which includes the Bedouin, Arabic, and Islamic culture (Al-Momani 2020). These tales express fear, mostly brought about by supernatural beings like Ghoul and Jinn-these become representations of the unknown and uncontrollable. Used as tools to teach moral lessons and discourage morally objectionable behaviour towards the natural order and supernatural beings in it, these characters stand tall in the wilderness of folklore (Hurreiz 1977). Supernatural fear is, nonetheless, a vehicle the predominant fears of Jordanian folk narratives traverse to discuss social and existential issues. Narratives of hospitality and bravery harbor an ethical conflict or dig into their deepest fears that underpin cultural norms and values (Nazia et al., 2023). Desert stories of travellers encountering ghouls are cautionary accounts warning against foolishness, stressing a need for wisdom and faith (Muhawi&Kanaana, 1989).

### **Theoretical Perspectives of Fear in Folk Tales**

In the first place, theoretical tools have to be used for understanding how fear relates in Jordanian folk tales to psychological, cultural, and symbolic aspects. Psychoanalytic notions, particularly from Freud (1919) or, more recently, Jung (1959), would be used as back-up material for insights into the unconscious fears and wishes encased in these narratives. For instance, Freudian uncanny would be a real help in understanding how familiar and yet strange elements in folk tales succeed in desiring fear, whereas Jungian archetypes would enlighten their meanings symbolically. All of that leading into structuralism as put forward by Lévi-Strauss (1963), which provides theory for analyzing all the underlying patterns and binary oppositions in folk tales.

To sum up, it begins with cultural evolution theory (Boyd & Richerson, 1985) which complements this analysis with a temporal angle by tracing how folk tales evolve in time according to contextual changes in values and environments.

Finally, terror management theory (Becker, 1973; Greenberg et al., 2015) serves as a perspective with which to consider folk tales' role in confronting existential fears, like death. That is informing folk tales for both practical exercise in navigating that human condition and symbolic escape from these fears.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study aims to investigate and to assess how fear is perceived in different Jordanian sociocultural contexts. This study employed a descriptive-analytical approach integrating quantitative and qualitative method to enable more understanding of causes of fear among folk tales. We have chosen a famous Jordanian folk tales for certain figures of Ghoul and Jinn.

### **Participants**

The participants were members of Jordanian society who recalled folk tales from their childhood that taught them values or attitudes, or gave them an idea of a particular culture that they carried into adulthood. Through

certain characters in these stories, fear seeped into their hearts in the shape of didactic attitudes. This study involved 334 Jordanian citizens from different cities in Jordan and all of them live in the country.

### Analysis of Data

The descriptive–analytical method is the foundation of this study because it is appropriate for addressing the topic of “the concept of fear in Jordanian folk tales”.

The study population, as mentioned above, was made up of members of Jordanian society who remembered the folk tales that were told to them as children and from which they picked up values or lessons or adopted a particular culture that they have adhered to throughout their lives. Some of the characters’ attitudes allowed fear to seep into these stories. Because of the size of the study population, an accurate count is not possible. As the study population was large and not specific, 384 respondents were selected according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) and Sekaran and Bougie (2010), and a questionnaire was administered to each sample member through the link <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdDRoDhtPARTkyhfFRFLTq3rYc9WPT7eN-G-yT07FYLH5b0rw/viewform?usp=sharing> using Google Survey software. After distributing the questionnaires, we received 334 replies, representing 87% of the main sample. Table 1 shows the distribution of the sample members according to the demographic characteristics of the participants.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of the Participants.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	127	38.0
Female	207	62.0
<b>Total</b>	334	100.0

  

Age	Frequency	Percentage
- 18 years	3	0.9
18–30 years	43	12.9
31–45 years	152	45.5
46–60 years	115	34.4
+ 60 years	21	6.3
<b>Total</b>	334	100.0

**Table 2.** Statements of knowledge of Folk tales.

Statement	N° of answers	Percentage
Have you ever listened to a Jordanian folk tale?		
Yes	279	83.5%
I don't remember	47	14.1%
No	8	2.4%
Total	334	100.0%
Do you have a favourite folk tale?		
Yes	102	30.5%
No	232	69.5%
Total	334	100.0%
Do you remember how this story affected your feelings and sentiments?		
Yes, sure	114	34.1%
In a way	135	40.4%
No	85	25.4%
Total	334	100.0%
What emotions did you feel while reading or listening to the folk story?		
Cultural and heritage connection	49	14.7%
Emotional effect (such as sadness or joy)	94	28.1%
Learn and gain lessons	96	28.7%
Escape from reality and imagination	31	9.3%
Entertainment and laughter	52	15.6%
Inspiration and motivation	12	3.6%
Total	334	100.0%

### Study Tool

The study tool was built to measure the concept of fear in Jordanian folk tales. It consisted of two parts.

The first part included demographic information, consisting of gender, age group, educational qualification, and the following questions:

- “Have you ever listened to a Jordanian folk tale?”
- “Do you have a favourite folk tale?”
- “Do you remember how this story affected your feelings and sentiments?”
- “What emotions did you feel while reading or listening to the folk tale?”

The second part included 17 study questions, all of which related to the concept of fear in Jordanian folk tales. The tool was designed along the lines of a five-point Likert scale, and the following dimensions were addressed:

- The first dimension, comprising six statements, addressed fear in Jordanian folk tales.
- The second dimension, comprising five statements, was concerned with the religious content of traditional folk tales from Jordan.
- The third dimension, comprising six statements, discussed the connection between gender and Jordanian folk tales.

### Validity of the Study Tool

The content validity, internal construction validity, and reliability of the study tool were verified as described below.

**Content validity.** Academic reviewers from Jordan University and other experts in the Linguistics and Socio-Cultural topics carried out an accurate macro review that covered all the research constructs to test the concept of fear in Jordanian folk tales. The questionnaire was distributed to a variety of reviewers to confirm the accuracy of its paragraphs and obtain their input on necessary revisions. We solicited suggestions for any necessary modifications under each dimension, and after reviewing the opinions, recommendations, and remarks of each arbitrator, we decided to accept wording that was supported by at least 80% of the arbitrators. Some phrases were added, some deleted, and some changed. At the end of the process, 17 statements remained.

**Internal construction validity.** The internal construction of the scale was verified using Pearson’s correlation test to identify the correlation coefficient of each statement within its dimension, as shown in Table 2. A Pearson correlation analysis laid out a relationship among fear that exists in all dimensions of the statements as they measure fear in the Jordanian folk tales: all values were greater than 0.30, and significance upward at level 0.01, pretty much acceptable as stated by Pallant (2005). The test included all 17 statements.

**Table 3.** The Correlation Coefficient of Each Statement Within Its Dimension.

Dimension 1 Fear in Jordanian folk tales		Dimension 2 Religious aspect of Jordanian traditional folk tales		Dimension 3 Relationship between Jordanian folk stories and gender
1	0.650**	1	0.247**	0.291**
2	0.754**	2	0.373**	0.406**
3	0.804**	3	0.364**	0.416**
4	0.632**	4	0.261**	0.333**
5	0.550**	5	0.367**	0.379**
6	0.601**			0.319**

**Content validity.** Person correlation test showed that all statements have a relationship with its dimensions. Values

are more than (0.30) which is acceptable (Pallant, 2005), and all statements measure the concept of fear in Jordanian folk tales.

**Reliability.** Using Cronbach’s alpha test, we applied the equation of internal consistency to determine the stability of the instrument. According to the test results, all of the scale’s variables have generally higher Cronbach’s alpha values (0.60), which is acceptable in research and studies (Hair et al., 2010). This means that the reliability coefficients for the questionnaire cover the range 0.746–0.773 and are very close to 1.00, as indicated in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for All Three Dimensions and Total Score for the Scale.

Variables	Statements	Cronbach's Alpha
Fear in Jordanian folk tales	6	0.746
Religious aspect of Jordanian traditional folk tales	5	0.773
Relationship between Jordanian folk tales and gender	6	0.763
<b>All Questions</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0.867</b>

### Data Analysis Techniques

To answer the study questions and hypotheses formulated to examine the concept of fear in Jordanian folk tales, a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the collected data and test the research hypotheses. The following statistical techniques and tests were used in the data analysis:

- Frequencies and percentages to describe demographic variables.
- Pearson's correlation test to show the internal construction validity of the scale.
- Cronbach's alpha reliability test to measure the strength of the correlation and coherence between questionnaire items, highlight the stability of the consistency with which the instrument measures the concept, and help assess the "goodness" of a measure.
- Descriptive statistical techniques, which included means and standard deviations, to illustrate responses to study fields
- Independent sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA tests
- A five-point Likert scale as follows:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Relative importance is assigned due to:

Class Interval =  $\frac{\text{Maximum Class} - \text{Minimum Class}}{\text{Number of Level}}$

Number of Level

$$\text{Class Interval} = \frac{5 - 1}{3} = \frac{4}{3} = 1.33$$

- The low level ranges from 1.00 to 2.33.
- The medium level ranges from 2.34 to 3.67.
- The high level ranges from 3.68 to 5.00.

### Results of Data

*Question 1: What is the level of fear in Jordanian folk tales from the perspective of the Jordanian population?*

The research used the mean and standard deviation to show the level of fear in Jordanian folk tales from the Jordanian population's perspective, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 5.** Level of Fear in Jordanian Folk Tales from the Perspective of the Jordanian Population (in Descending Order).

No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Level
5	In our folk tales, we change the roles of the ghoul, the jinn, and the goblin according to what we want to teach the child or the people who hear the story.	3.78	0.91	1	High
2	When I was young, a certain sentence that I read or heard aroused in me the feelings of fear and anticipation. (For example: The monster came to eat while you were going to sleep, the man with skinned leg is coming after you, etc.)	3.77	0.98	2	High
3	When I now think of folk tales, I think of mythical creatures such as; Dracula, jinn, goblins and the old witch.	3.57	1.06	3	Medium
4	The concept of fear in folk tales has contributed in one way or another to developing caution in children or directing them towards the right choices.	3.47	1.06	4	Medium
1	The Jordanian folk tale is characterized by the presence of an element of fear in it.	3.31	0.99	5	Medium
6	I am still afraid of some stories in which ghouls, ogres, goblins, and jinn are mentioned.	2.69	1.17	6	Medium
	Total	3.43	0.68		Medium

Table 5 reveals that the overall mean of the dimension – fear in Jordanian folk tales – was 3.43, indicating a medium level. The mean of this dimension varied from 3.78 to 2.69.

Statement 5 (In our folk tales, we change the roles of the ghoul, the jinn, and the goblin according to what we want to teach the child or the people who hear the story) ranked first, with a mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 0.91, which is a high level.

Statement 2 (When I was young, a certain sentence that I read or heard aroused in my feelings of fear and anticipation – for example, the monster came to eat while you were going to sleep, the man with a skinned leg is coming after you, etc.) came in second place, with a high-level mean of 3.77 and a standard deviation of 0.98.

Statement 6 (I am still afraid of some stories in which ghouls, ogres, goblins, and jinn are mentioned) came in last, with a medium-level mean of 2.69 and a standard deviation of 0.68.

*Question 2: What is the level of the religious aspect of Jordanian traditional folk tales from the perspective of the Jordanian population?*

The research used the mean and standard deviation to show the level of the religious aspect of Jordanian folk tales from the Jordanian population's perspective, as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Level of the Religious Aspect of Jordanian Traditional Folk Tales from the Perspective of the Jordanian Population (in Descending Order).

No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Level
2	Religious elements give the folk tale a religious and moral dimension, which enhances its moral and spiritual impact on the listener and deepens his connection to it.	3.81	0.88	1	High
5	The interaction between culture and religion makes the tale reflect a perfect balance between the moral and entertainment aspects.	3.71	0.85	2	High
1	Religion appears to influence our perception of mythical creatures and the fear associated with them in folk tales.	3.38	1.02	3	Medium
4	The religious elements show a kind of emotional response to the mythical beings, adding to the suspense and tension of the tale.	3.36	0.99	4	Medium
3	Religious elements, such as myths and beliefs, can show different aspects of fear of mythical beings in tales. Do you agree with that?	3.33	0.95	5	Medium
	<b>Total</b>	3.52	0.68		Medium

The religious component of Jordanian traditional folk tales has a mean that ranges from 3.81 to 3.33, according to Table 5, and the overall mean for the dimension is 3.52, which is a medium level.

Statement 2 (Religious elements give the folk tale a religious and moral dimension, which enhances its moral and spiritual impact on the listener and deepens his connection to it) ranked first, with a mean of 3.81 and a standard deviation of 0.88, which is a high level.

Statement 5 (The interaction between culture and religion makes the tale reflect a perfect balance between the moral and entertainment aspects) ranked second, with a mean of 3.71 and a standard deviation of 0.85, which is also a high level.

Statement 3 (Religious elements, such as myths and beliefs, can show different aspects of fear of mythical beings in tales. Do you agree with that?) ranked last, with a mean of 3.33 and a standard deviation of 0.95, which is a medium level.

*Question 3: What is the level of the relationship between Jordanian folk stories and gender tales from the perspective of the Jordanian population?*

The research used the mean and standard deviation to illustrate the degree of the association between gender and Jordanian folk tales from the Jordanian population's perspective, as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Level of the Relationship Between Jordanian Folk Stories and Gender from the Perspective of the Jordanian Population (in Descending Order).

No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Level
2	Folk tales influence the formation of the stereotypical image of males and females in Jordanian society.	3.63	0.90	1	Medium
5	The representation of genders in stories affects the suspense and excitement related to frightening situations.	3.57	0.87	2	Medium

No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Level
6	The custom of telling stories to children is preserved by the mother, and the element of fear is clearly highlighted in the form of a threat: "If you do not sleep now, the ogre will come to you," and so on.	3.55	1.08	3	Medium
3	There are clear disparities in the representation of males and females in folk tales, which reflects social disparities in terms of the functions that males and females play in the folktale. (For example, the man plays the hero and the woman is a victim or villain in most stories).	3.54	0.94	4	Medium
1	Jordanian folk tales reflect the distribution of roles and responsibilities between the genders in society.	3.48	0.93	5	Medium
4	In Jordanian folk tales, females are depicted as evil creatures such as "ghouls" or "witches".	3.07	1.11	6	Medium
	<b>Total</b>	3.47	0.66		Medium

Table 7 shows that the mean of this dimension (the relationship between Jordanian folk stories and gender) ranged between 3.63 and 3.07, while the whole dimension earned a total mean of 3.47, which is a medium level.

Statement 2 (Folk tales influence the formation of the stereotypical image of males and females in Jordanian society) ranked first, with a mean of 3.63 and a standard deviation of 0.90, which is a medium level.

Statement 5 (The representation of genders in stories affects the suspense and excitement related to frightening situations) ranked second on the same scale, with a mean of 3.57 and a standard deviation of 0.87.

Statement 4 (In Jordanian folk tales, females are depicted as evil creatures such as "ghouls" or "witches.") ranked last, with a mean of 3.07 and a standard deviation of 1.11, which is a medium level.

*Question 4: Are there statistically significant differences in the level of fear in Jordanian folk tales, the religious aspect of Jordanian traditional folk tales, and the relationship between Jordanian folk stories and gender according to gender, age, and qualification?*

To answer this question, the study used mean, standard deviation, independent samples t-test, and one-way ANOVA tests, as follows:

### Gender

**Table 8.** Independent Samples T-test.

Source	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df.	T value	Sig.
Fear in Jordanian folk tales	Male	127	3.46	0.66	332	0.710	0.478
	Female	207	3.41	0.70			
Religious aspect of Jordanian traditional folk tales	Male	127	3.46	0.75	332	-1.182-	0.238
	Female	207	3.55	0.64			
Relationship between Jordanian folk stories and gender	Male	127	3.44	0.69	332	-0.809-	0.428
	Female	207	3.50	0.64			

According to the gender (t) values = (0.710, 1.182, 0.809), respectively, the results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences at 0.05 in the level of fear in Jordanian folk tales, the religious aspect of Jordanian traditional folk tales, or the relationship between Jordanian folk stories and gender. The variance between mean values, if found, was also not significant.

### Age

**Table 9.** One-Way ANOVA for Age.

Source		Sum of Squares	Df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Fear in Jordanian folk tales	Between Groups	2.299	4	0.575	1.232	0.297
	Within Groups	153.400	329	0.466		
	Total	155.699	333			
Religious aspect of Jordanian traditional folk tales	Between Groups	3.816	4	0.954	2.076	0.084
	Within Groups	151.197	329	0.460		
	Total	155.013	333			
	Between Groups	3.573	4	0.893	2.073	0.084



Source		Sum of Squares	Df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Relationship between Jordanian folk stories and gender	Within Groups	141.795	329	0.431		
	Total	145.369	333			

According to Table 9, there were no statistically significant age-related differences at 0.05 in any of the three sources, as shown by their F values.

### Qualification

**Table 10.** One-Way ANOVA for Qualification.

Source		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Fear in Jordanian folk tales	Between Groups	0.218	3	0.073	0.154	0.927
	Within Groups	155.481	330	0.471		
	Total	155.699	333			
Religious aspect of Jordanian traditional folk tales	Between Groups	2.435	3	0.812	1.755	0.156
	Within Groups	152.578	330	0.462		
	Total	155.013	333			
Relationship between Jordanian folk stories and gender	Between Groups	0.219	3	0.073	0.166	0.919
	Within Groups	145.149	330	0.440		
	Total	145.369	333			

According to Table 10, there were no statistically significant qualification-related differences at 0.05 in any of the three sources, as shown by their F values.

## DISCUSSION

This study feigns to highlight the significance of fear in our souls and minds, as well as how it can be a powerful didactic tool that teaches manners and morals. It pretends to look at how folk tales can make people feel afraid and whether or not that fear can stay with them and be passed on to their offspring. It examines the findings through theories that insist on how powerful emotions like fear can be used even to face fear (Bettelheim, 1976).

An examination into fear in Jordanian folktales through the established survey, shows knowledge transmission by narratives as a potent instrument for teaching moral lessons and instilling wisdom while keeping tangible cultural heritage. Results, in table (4) show that Jordanians can change the role of fear of mentioned creatures according to their needs and according to the lesson or message they want to transmit to their children. Rudan (2016) described fear not only as an emotion but a narrative device to underpin themes and motifs of oral traditions. Supernatural entities such as the ghouls and jinn in Jordan play core roles in folk tales that embody this fear. Non only Ghouls are used as a terror to warn children from wandering far alone at night, but their sentences as well, can cause a certain fear as table (4) shows a higher level of fear. The famous Jordanian tale describes a ghouls clad as an old woman ignorantly amalgamating sweets with its monster imposition luring children into the desert. These are stories that have been passed down from generations, and so the ghouls remains a cautionary spirit prominently in Arab culture (Al-Rawi,2009).

Unlike ghouls, jinn are a bit more complicated in both Jordanian and Arabic folklore, as they are considered a real entity well rooted in Islamic religious beliefs. Ghouls are evil things, while jinn can be either good or evil. In Jordanian tales, the commonest places where jinn dwell would be deserted houses or wells. Certain tales claim that jinn take possession of humans to avenge themselves, or that provoke mischief. In one tale, a poor farmer becomes rich due to the assistance of a Jinn, which withdraws such riches when the farmer is unable to keep his promise with regard to the protection of the site of his fortune. This story underscores the ambivalent nature of jinn and demonstrates their destructive as well as benevolent capacities while putting forward themes of truthfulness and greed. In this view, the mention of jinn is a constant reminder in Jordanian folklore about the belief that the community holds in the supernatural and the ability of the same to define good behavior. Results showed that this tendency of fear became ingrained in our souls and minds.

The performative context of oral storytelling in Jordanian folk tales is a vital aspect. Rudan, following Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication (1980), accentuates that the storytellers utilize gestures, facial expressions, and intonation of voice in order to amplify the emotional force of their tales on their audiences (Rudan, 2016). Within the Jordanian context, tales about ghouls and jinn are cast into community settings where audience reactions

and sociolinguistic modes amplify the fear and morality offered by such stories. Stories set in particularly dangerous places such as graveyards and crossroads would pull from this collective sense of these places within the community as sites of supernatural activity. The dynamic performance in this context strengthens the cultural and psychological functions of fear that folk tales inherently carry.

The volume *Violence and Fear in Folktales* provides insight into the possible understanding of these stories. Boudinot (2005) contends that fear and violence in folktales perform crucial cultural and psychological functions, assisting children in negotiating the dangers and moral dilemmas present in the real world (Bettelheim, 1975). Stories of night monsters in Jordan are the ones most emphasized, covering the ghouls and the jinn, and are often used to explain safety to children and the morality of not going far into certain places or staying out late into the night. Such narratives are creepy, but they add a protection function through learning caution and respect for the societal boundaries.

The psychological experience of fear in Jordanian folk tales is also potent. This study showed that children may not be harmed by fear in folktales; rather, the telling and interpretation of the stories is the most significant factor influencing their effects (Heuscher, 1974). In Jordan, in most instances, the folk tales are performed in semi-public circles or even in the theatrical sense, where the complete atmosphere of imaginations, morals, and human virtues become mutually reinforced through the performance itself and perhaps an agreed interpretation shared within the performances of that specific community.

## CONCLUSION

Oral folk tales are more than stories; they are the pulsations of a culture, with history, ethics, and human experiences as threads woven into its living tapestry. Using the mesmerizing world of Jordanian folk tales, the study examined the various faces of fear, stress its didactic, cautionary, and motivating role. Be it the desert-ghost murmurs, the tests of courage presented to the heroes in moral dilemmas, or the social fears that ultimately work to overcome fear—they are akin to a guide showing the way wisdom, endurance, and deeper comprehension of the complexities of life. Nevertheless, the fears remain, embedded in the hearts of the listeners long after the tales are shared, as the very frightening creatures and unforgettable lessons from these tales never fail to remind us of the world's many mysteries and issues.

Jordanian folk tales, enriched by influences of Bedouin, Arabic, and Islamic cultures, are a veritable treasure of cultural heritage. Not fossilized, these live-a-breathing tales change and evolve after every telling. By the campfire, at family gatherings, through their grandparents' voices, the stories continue to entertain and bind one generation to the next; reminding them of lessons of courage, belief, and the perpetual war of good against evil. These stories are no longer mere entertainment; they have become an end in themselves to celebrate identity, to pay respect to the past while attempting to negotiate the present. Even as we grow older, the fear associated with these tales—be it the desert ghoul lurking in shadows or the jinn unseen at crossroads—lingers in our memories, alongside their undying charm.

The purpose of this research paper is to put forward that folk tales should not be looked at as dust-covered, moldy relics, but must instead be revered as living, breathing stories. They are stories that want to tell universal truths, not for any specific people but for humanity as a whole. So investigate how fear works within the Jordanian folk tale and dig deeper why these stories become so important in living and creating the worldview. These tales teach us that fear can be treasure if it means courage and understanding enough to disentangle one out of its grasp. It will remind us just what fear engraves in the mind too. They better understand how fear can settle in the hearts through creatures and symbols that have become part of these tales. Fear, to its own sake, not just as a folkloric remnant of childhood, for mystery and lessons grounded in the stories. Magic of storytelling—more than anything else well, just magic to connect, teaching ageless lessons and making it easier to push walls aside and allow entry to light and dark corners common to our humanity. In a world seemingly intent on forging division and isolation between the members, folk tales serve yet still as the thread tying us closer to each other and this multi-hued legacy of our ancestry, while still their fears continue to shape our understanding of the world and of ourselves.

This article though this empirical survey examines the psychological and ideological shift in societal perceptions of oral folktales over time. It reveals that fear, once associated with horrifying depictions of supernatural creatures, like ghoul or Jinn, has diminished due to new adaptations and reinterpretations that disrupt stereotypical imagery. While fear remains a psychological factor, its manifestation is fluid. It is essential to mention that in societies as Jordan's, religion functions as a stabilizing and regulatory force against fear.

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